

Placerville mine to temporarily open to public

By Tom DuHain, KCRA-TV

PLACERVILLE – A 49ers-era gold mine, usually closed to the public, will open this weekend for guided tours in Placerville.

The Priest Mine is one of the few surviving “hard rock” mines.

Started in 1850, it was completely dug by hand picks. No dynamite was used in the small mine.

“The rock was a little too soft for that. If they blew, it could cave in,” tour guide Charlie Basham said. “So they actually dug an arched cavern, which is stronger, much like the Roman arches.”

The mine is fairly shallow but historic because of its age and because every cut in the rock was made by a miner’s pick.

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